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## Early American Writers for Children

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THIS study of the early American poet for children, Eliza L. Follen, repeats some of the important facts given in an article, "Enter the Happy Child," published by the author in the *PEABODY JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*, May 1930. It adds to that discussion, however, a number of the poems by Mrs. Follen which have entirely disappeared from the anthologies for children.

It is doubtful if anywhere in the colonial literature of America appears a reference to the playing, happy child which is entirely free of religious didacticism. The *NEW-ENGLAND PRIMER*, which Barrett Wendell, because of its enormous influence, calls the greatest of American books, popularized for over a century a type of almost gruesome verse that was not to disappear until the world of childhood had achieved at least a semblance of freedom through the activities of the humanitarian innovators of the early nineteenth century.

The complete absence of aesthetic and human appreciation of childhood in our early writers is not surprising, however. The poetic theory of childhood popularized by such sensitive interpreters as Wordsworth and Barrie—that children are lovely and mystical

beings who came "trailing clouds of glory" straight from God—was not to enter English literature until the publication of William Blake's *SONGS OF INNOCENCE* in 1789, one year after the Frenchman, St. Pierre, had sentimentalized the innocence of youth in his *PAUL ET VIRGINIA*. The English protest against the exploitation of children, with the exception of two slight poems by Blake, did not appear in literature until the coming of the romantic movement of the nineteenth century.

In 1832, the year in which Mrs. Follen published her collection of poems for children with the title of *LITTLE SONGS*, the American publications were being deluged with sentimental and morbid poetry for young people. The tomb, thoughts of early death, the fear of God, the necessity of obedience to adult commands, were favorite subjects. Miss Rosalie V. Halsey, who evidently knew nothing of Mrs. Follen's remarkable innovations, in her almost exhaustive study of early American books for children, *FORGOTTEN BOOKS OF THE AMERICAN NURSERY*, says that "of the poetry written in America for children before eighteen hundred and forty there is little that need be said. Much of it was entirely religious in character and

\* This is the first of a series of articles by Professor Roller. Others will appear in subsequent issues.

most of it was colorless and dreary stuff. The 'Child's Gem,' of eighteen hundred and thirty-eight, considered a treasury of precious verse by one reviewer and issued on embossed Morocco binding, was characteristic of many contemporary *poems*, in which nature was forced to exude precepts of virtue and industry." With a few exceptions, the poets saw nothing lovely, quaint or jolly in childhood.

There had been a few exceptions, however. Mrs. Hale had published "Mary's Little Lamb" two years before in the JUVENILE MISCELLANY, thus starting an almost international literary battle which is not yet over. (As late as May 18, 1928, an English writer in the New York TIMES claimed that the poem was English.) Clement Clarke Moore, nine years before, had seen his "A Visit from St. Nicholas," probably the first American poem for children that is neither moral or religious but, instead, is full of wholesome gayety, published in a newspaper as anonymous verse. Anna Maria Wells at the time was writing delicate little vignettes on decorous girlhood suggestive of the later Christina Rossetti, and Lydia Maria Child, although too often obviously didactic, was producing such classics as "Thanksgiving-Day" and "Who Stole the Bird's Nest?"

No poet, however, with the exception of William Blake, English or American, had given the public before 1832 a volume of poems for children written entirely in the modern spirit. Mrs. Follen was a decided pioneer here. The only collection of verse for young people similar to it, issued before 1832, was MOTHER GOOSE.

The modest preface of the first edition stated its purpose. It was, the author announced, an attempt "to catch something of that good-natured pleasantry, that musical nonsense, which makes Mother Goose so attractive to children of all ages."

That Mrs. Follen achieved her purpose is evident, for the book went through nine editions in her own country and won an English publication. For several generations, at least,

it was a "best seller" for children.

Nowhere in the poetry of Mrs. Follen is there even a suggestion of morbidity, and not a single poem was written for the purpose of creating a moral. Although at times they lack the magic that really makes a poem for children, the verses are simple, child-like, and emotionally clean.

To the student of children's literature Mrs. Follen lives entirely, I imagine, as the author of a poem she did not write. A large number of the anthologies I have examined give her credit for the little gem, at times attributed to Mother Goose, "The Three Little Kittens." Yet in the second preface to the 1851 edition of LITTLE SONGS she says that she is adding "two poems by an anonymous poet" which she found in an English publication. She adds, however, that she had made some "additions" to the lines. One of these poems is "The Three Little Kittens."

Below are given some of the poems on play as found in the first edition of LITTLE SONGS. In a subsequent article on Mrs. Follen, to appear in this journal, a few of the more serious verses will be printed.

#### "Baby's Birthday"

Come, Charles, blow the trumpet,  
And George, beat the drum,  
For this is the baby's birthday!  
Little Annie shall sing,  
And Jenny shall dance,  
And father the jews-harp will play.  
Rad-er-er too tan-da-ro te  
Rad-er-er tad-or-er tan do re.

#### "Stop! Stop! Pretty Water"

"Stop! Stop! pretty water,"  
Said Mary one day,  
To a frolicsome brook  
That was running away.

"You run on so fast!  
I wish you would stay;  
My boat and my flowers  
You will carry away.

"But I will run after;  
Mother says that I may;  
For I would know where  
You are running away."

So Mary ran on;  
But I have heard say  
That she never could find  
Where the brook ran away.

"The Good Moolly Cow"

Come! supper is ready;  
Come! boys and girls, now,  
For here is fresh milk  
From the good moolly cow.

Have done with your fife,  
And your row-de-dow-dow,  
And taste this sweet milk  
From the good moolly cow.

Whoever is fretting  
Must clear up his brow,  
Or he'll have no milk  
From the good moolly cow.

And here is Miss Pussy;  
She means by *mee-ow*,  
Give me too some milk  
From the good moolly cow.

When children are hungry,  
O, who can tell how  
They love the fresh milk  
From the good moolly cow!

So, when you meet Moolly,  
Just say, with a bow,  
"Thank you for your milk,  
Mrs. Good Moolly Cow."

"Walter and His Dog"

There was a little boy,  
And he had a piece of bread,  
And he put his little cap  
On his head, head, head.

Upon his hobby-horse  
Then he went to take a ride,  
With his pretty Spaniel Flash  
By his side, side, side.

Little Walter was his name,  
And he said to little Flash,  
"Let us gallop round the house,  
With a dash, dash, dash."

So he laid down his bread  
In a snug little place,  
And away Walter went  
For a race, race, race.

But Flash had a plan,  
In his little roguish head,  
Of taking to himself  
Walter's bread, bread, bread.

So he watched for a moment  
When Walter did not look,  
And the nice piece of bread  
Slyly took, took, took.

When Walter saw the rogue,  
He cried, "O, naughty Flash!"  
And he showed his little whip  
With a lash, lash, lash.

But Flash looked so good-natured  
With his tail curled up behind,  
That his aunty said to Walter,  
"Never mind, mind, mind.

"Flash is nothing but a puppy;  
So, Walter, do not worry;  
If he knew that he'd done wrong,  
He'd be sorry, sorry, sorry.

"And don't be angry, Walter,  
That Flash has had a treat;  
Here's another piece of bread  
You may eat, eat, eat."

So Walter ate his bread,  
And then to Flash he cried,  
"Come, you saucy little dog,  
Let us ride, ride, ride."

"My Little Doll Rose"

I have a little doll;  
I take care of her clothes;  
She has soft flaxen hair,  
And her name it is Rose.

She has pretty blue eyes,  
And a very small nose,  
And a cunning little mouth,  
My dear little Rose.

I have a little sofa,  
Where my doll may repose,  
Or sit up like a lady;  
My knowing little Rose.

My doll can move her arms,  
And stand upon her toes;  
Or make a pretty courtesy,  
My funny little Rose.

"How old is your dolly?"  
Very young, I suppose,  
For she cannot go alone,  
My precious little Rose.

Indeed I cannot tell,  
In poetry or prose,  
How beautiful she is  
My darling little Rose.

"It is a Pleasant Day"

Come, my children, come away,  
For the sun shines bright to-day;  
Little children, come with me,  
Birds and brooks and posies see;  
Get your hats and come away,  
For it is a pleasant day.

Every thing is laughing, singing,  
All the pretty flowers are springing.  
See the kitten, full of fun,  
Sporting in the pleasant sun.  
Children, too, may sport and play,  
For it is a pleasant day.

Bring the hoop, and bring the ball;  
Come with happy faces all;  
Let us make a merry ring,  
Talk and laugh, and dance and sing;  
Quickly, quickly, come away,  
For it is a pleasant day.

"The Dog and the Cat,  
The Duck and the Rat"

Once on a time, in rainy weather,  
A dog and a cat,  
A duck and a rat,  
All met in the barn together.

The dog he barked,  
The duck she quarked,  
The cat she humped her back;  
The rat he squeaked,  
And off he sneaked  
Straight into a nice large crack.

The little dog said (and he looked very wise),  
"I think, Mrs. Puss,  
You make a great fuss,  
With your back and your great green eyes.

And you, Madam Duck,  
You waddle and cluck,  
Till it gives one the fidgets to hear you.  
You had better run off  
To the old pig's trough,  
Where none but the pigs, ma'am are near you."

The duck was good-natured, and she ran away;  
But old pussy cat,  
With her back up sat,  
And said she intended to stay;  
And she showed him her paws,  
With her long, sharp claws.  
So the dog was afraid to come near;  
For puss, if she pleases,  
When a little dog teases,  
Can give him a box on the ear.

"The Sun is Up"

The sun is up, the sun is up!  
Sing merrily we, the sun is up.  
The birds they sing,  
Upon the wing,  
Hey, nony-nony-no.

The pigeons coo,  
The moolies moo,  
Hey, troli-loli-lo.  
The sun is up, the sun is up;  
Sing merrily we, the sun is up.

The horses neigh,  
The young lambs play,  
Hey, nony-nony-no.  
The bees they hum;  
O, quickly come!  
Hey, troli-loli-lo.  
The sun is up, the sun is up;  
Sing merrily we, the sun is up.

The morning hours,  
The dewy flowers,  
Hey, nony-nony-no,  
And all we meet,  
Are fresh and sweet,  
Hey, troli-loli-lo.  
The sun is up, the sun is up;  
Sing merrily we, the sun is up.

Then sleepy heads,  
All leave your beds!  
Hey, nony-nony-no.  
For everything  
Doth sweetly sing,  
Hey, troli-loli-lo.  
The sun is up, the sun is up;  
Sing merrily we, the sun is up.

"Nothing but Ba-A"

Little Fanny and Lucy,  
One sunshiny day,  
Went to walk in the meadow,  
And have some play.

They said to a sheep,  
"Pray, how's your mama?"  
But the lazy sheep answered  
Them nothing but "ba-a!"

"When Evening is Come"

When evening is come,  
And father's at home,  
Mother says that we may  
Have a go-to-bed play.  
A book he will bring us,  
A song he will sing us,  
A story he'll tell us,  
He'll make believe sell us.  
And we will cut papers,  
And all sorts of capers,  
And laugh, dance, and play,  
And frolic away,  
When evening is come,  
And father's at home.

"Work and Play"

Come, let us take a walk, —  
The rain has gone away, —  
And have some pleasant talk,  
And laugh, and sing, and play.

The old hen dries her wings,  
The young lambs frisk away,  
The merry sparrow sings;  
Come, let us go and play.

The brook runs gayly on,  
As though it were in play,  
And says to every one,  
"Let's have some fun to-day."

The little busy bee  
Doth sing and work all day,  
And teaches you and me  
To work as well as play.

The world is full of flowers:  
Put up your work, I say;  
Let's use these limbs of ours,  
And have some real play.



# Present Trends in the Teaching of Spelling

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THE presence here of a speaker on the subject of spelling may need an explanation, but it requires no apology. The purpose of spelling is to enable the child to write correctly the words he employs in his written discourse. Spelling therefore belongs logically in the same household with English composition. Its severance of the ties of wedlock and its present state of separate maintenance are defensible on technical grounds—the technicalities of unphonetic spelling. Experts despair of solving the problems of spelling incidentally in the language household, hence their preference for spelling's independence. Reminiscent of the saying about the Lord of high heaven and the strawberry, one may add that doubtless educators might have made a better plan, but doubtless educators never did.

In the list of school subjects spelling occupies a somewhat contradictory position. Rated as of secondary importance in this list, it enjoys the distinction of being foremost in approximating stability as a result of scientific studies. Shining through the great number of objective investigations that bear on its problems, one can now discern with considerable definiteness both its materials and its methods of instruction. In fact spelling is in a position of leadership among the school subjects in curriculum construction. No other subject has gone so far or achieved so definitely.

There have been two schools of curriculum makers in spelling. One school has insisted on deriving its curriculum materials from adult usage; the other, from childhood usage. It is now becoming apparent that neither the standard of maturity nor that of immaturity will alone meet the requirements of a scien-

tific course of study. The present trend is toward drawing appropriate materials from both of these sources, on the ground that a child must live while he is preparing to live. This is done by selecting words used with high frequency by both children and adults. Such a word list, studies indicate, will comprise about six-sevenths of all the words in a minimal spelling list. There will be some differences of opinion about the disposition of words found in children's lists only, or in adult lists only, but these differences concern but a relatively small fraction of all the material involved, and may, for the present at least, be left out of the discussion.

On the problem of grading the materials of the course, the experts are much more at sea. The difficulties here are due largely to the lack of objective data to steer by. Investigators have been so absorbed in the problem of selecting subject matter that they have quite forgotten the problem of gradation. This, indeed, is true not only in spelling but in all subjects. The present vocabulary studies provide great arrays of words arranged alphabetically or according to frequency, leaving the decision to be made regarding the allocation of each of these words to the several grades.

During an investigation conducted by the writer it became evident that two kinds of information are needed before this problem can be solved: (1) information regarding the principle or principles of gradation to be applied, and (2) information regarding objective methods of applying the principle or principles.

Among the numerous principles that have been suggested and employed for this purpose, there are two outstanding contenders

for favor, difficulty of spelling for children and frequency of usage among children. Analysis of the facts available seems to indicate that of these two, the latter is the better. Its application amounts to this: placing in a given grade those words not previously learned that are most frequently used in the written expression of the pupils in that grade. In spite of the fact that this principle crosses purposes at some points with the difficulty principle, and allocates words like *Santa Claus* and *Christmas* to the primary grades, the writer has no fear that the specialists of this audience will look askance at this procedure. They will more likely welcome it for the close coordination it effects between spelling and composition. Moreover, it is encouraging to observe that this principle can be much more objectively applied when we come into possession of more adequate data on the frequency of usage of the different words of the minimal list in the different grades. At the present time there is not a single published study showing frequency of word usage by grades. These data, you may be interested to know, are on the way.

In the field of methods there is a problem that deserves urgent consideration,—the problem of study supervision. It is well known that supervised study involves two kinds of procedures, general and special. Although spelling experts were among the first to discover many of the special study activities that result in economical learning in their field, thus placing spelling in a position to lead in the supervised-study movement, classroom practice in study guidance has lagged behind its possibilities. In this subject the most effective study procedures are more accurately known than in any other, but teachers are failing to act seriously enough on the basis of these discoveries. It is safe to predict that, with proper supervisory leadership, teachers will in the near future be more successful in training children to use the study procedures whose effectiveness has been proven by experimental studies. The point has been reached where the stimulus of classroom ex-

periments is needed—experiments that throw light on the methods and results of training children in the habits of study indicated by investigations.

There is another type of work that bids fair to occupy more attention in the near future, namely, the handling of cases of pronounced weakness in spelling. Experiments indicate that the possibilities of success with cases of special disability in spelling are probably as great as they are with similar cases in other subjects. By the use of standardized tests these cases can be identified and the amount of their deficiency can be measured in years of spelling age. By the use of personal data, physical examinations, and supplementary informal tests, the causes of deficiency can often be determined and effective remedial treatment can often be provided. The future should see marked developments in the diagnosis and remedial treatment of problem cases in spelling. Thousands of these cases are languishing in stagnation and despair, waiting dumb and inarticulate for the relief that can be provided by scientific teaching. For the advancement of this work each school should have the service of one trained in methods of measurement and case-study technique. In addition, research in this field must be greatly extended. After a dozen more investigations have been made in this domain, it should be possible to present the classroom teacher and the school clinician with a description of the various kinds of symptoms exhibited by cases of disability, the common specific causes of these disabilities, and the remedies that can be employed to remove the causes. This may be a vision, but it is not visionary.

Lastly, your attention is invited to some new developments in spelling measurement. First as to standards of attainment after teaching. Teachers have been urged to secure 100 per cent accuracy on the spelling of the words of the minimal list. This is a pretty goal, but a very dubious one, for its attainment by all the pupils with a list of 4,000

# Dancing to Poetry

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TEACHERS of English and teachers of physical education owe a very special debt to Vachel Lindsay for his pioneer work in revealing the possibilities of dancing to poetry. There have been isolated instances of individuals who have danced to the spoken word. Isadora Duncan in her autobiography refers to occasions in her early years when she danced to her mother's recitation of favorite poems. But not until Vachel Lindsay had spent years preaching the gospel of "Poem Games" from coast to coast did the educational world wake up to the fact that dancing to poetry offers the solution to two long standing problems: (1) methods of rhythm training for schools not equipped with piano or victrola and (2) methods for vitalizing the study of poetry, for lifting it out of the realm of memory drill or of vague intellectual problem and placing it among those experiences which bring most to the child by enlisting his whole-souled participation.

The educational basis for advocating the study of poetry through dancing it rests upon the sound principle that we learn best through doing. The child who dances a poem is endeavoring to express through motion the same idea that the poet expressed in words. He is translating the poem into rhythmic motion, or as Vachel Lindsay expresses it, the child is "writing in the air." To create a rhythmic picture of the poem the dancer must sense accurately the mood and thought of the poet. There is no more accurate key to the poet's idea than the rhythmic pattern of words and syllables in which he phrases it. Through moving in harmony with this rhythmic pattern, a consciousness of the underlying emotion or thought inevitably dawns. Do not the psychologists tell us that we laugh and then

feel amused—that the act precedes and invites the emotion?

Because one is accustomed to associate music with dancing, it might make the idea of dancing to poetry clearer to think of the poem as a musical score with the syllables as notes and the lines as musical phrases. There is infinite variety in the cadences of word-groupings. Contrast these lines from Coleridge's "Kubla Khan":

"Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran"  
with the following lines from the same poem:  
"And 'midst this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war."

The subtle rhythmic changes which occur within the metric pattern of a poem, so often lost when a poem is set to music, are accentuated when the poem is danced. Through sensing in his movements this variety of rhythmic patterns the child comes easily and naturally to an understanding of poetic forms and meters.

Not only is the child's appreciation and understanding of the poem increased through dancing it but his reading of poetry is improved. In addition to the natural improvement that would follow from a clear understanding of the thought and a sensitiveness to the syllabic rhythm, a further stimulation to clear enunciation and effective reading may be secured by having one or a group do the reading while others dance. The chief difficulty lies in overcoming the common sing-song tendency (particularly true of young children) in rendering poetry. It is wise to permit the child to read aloud for the group to dance only such poems as he himself has danced successfully. His kinesthetic memory will aid him in reproducing the sound of the



rhythm as he has felt it.

As a first step in preparing children to read poems for dancing, it is valuable to have a group chant the recurring refrains of poems which the teacher reads. Many of the poems which Vachel Lindsay has written to be danced have such refrains, for instance: "The Sea Serpent Chantey" and "A Doll's Arabian Nights." Eugene Field's "Intry Mintry" also furnishes an example. Frequently it is desirable to repeat certain lines of poems to allow the dancer a longer interval in which to complete a dance figure. "The King of Yellow Butterflies" and "The Potatoes' Dance" as printed on pages 125 and 126 respectively in Vachel Lindsay's *COLLECTED POEMS* are illustrative. The repetition may be spoken by the group in the manner of a refrain.

In addition to the development of a keen sensitiveness and appreciation of poetic thought and forms, dancing to poetry while stirring the imagination, stimulates the creative impulse. An interesting experiment was tried with a group of public school pupils in Spokane, Washington. The results indicated that dancing to poetry was "writing in the air" in a very true sense. A group of girls was given one word to think of, such as "breeze" or "violet" or "brook." Each individual expressed in motion whatever idea was suggested to her by the word. She repeated the movements until the rhythm was definitely established in her consciousness, then she attempted to express her thought in words which reproduced the rhythm of her movements. Some very remarkable quatrains resulted.

For the very young child, dancing to poetry offers new and delightful channels for rhythmic self-expression. In schools lacking in facilities for carrying on a program of rhythm training, poetry can be utilized with very satisfactory results. In brief, training the child's sense of rhythm really means teaching the child to adapt his own individual rhythm to the variety of rhythms outside of himself, thus opening up new avenues through

which he can interpret his environment and express his individuality.

The child enters the first grade with varying degrees of susceptibility to rhythms outside of his own reaction, according to the richness of his home experience. He has acquired a walking and a running rhythm and he has a strong instinct for movement. The approved procedure is (1) to teach the child to perform the fundamental rhythms of walking and running in unison with the group; (2) to teach him variations of these fundamental activities; (3) to teach him new rhythmic activities and (4) as coordination increases, to teach him to perform combinations of rhythmic activities. The rich field of children's poems offers ample material for a program of rhythm training as outlined.

Robert Louis Stevenson's "Marching Song" and "Shadow March," and Shakespeare's "Jog On, Jog On" offer opportunities for simple walking and tiptoe activities. Variations of these fundamental movements are called for in Vachel Lindsay's "Explanation of the Grasshopper," Eugene Field's "Intry Mintry," and Stevenson's "Time to Rise" and "My Shadow." Such poems as Joyce Kilmer's "Trees," Michael Field's "The Dancers," and Lindsay's "The King of Yellow Butterflies" suggest a variety of rhythmic movements; while such poems as George MacDonald's, "The Wind and the Moon," Shaemas O' Sheel's "When April Rain Went By" and Richard Le Gallienne's "May is Building Her House" afford an excellent field for freedom of self-expression in simple rhythmic movements.

There are many points to recommend dancing to poetry, appealing as it does to the instinct for rhythmic motion and to the innate urge for self-expression. It fires the child's imagination and enlists his interest to the point of absorption. Any experience in which the child lives completely leaves its mark. Participation, whether as dancer or reader, demands a synchronization of thought, speech, and movement which inevitably leads to more perfect harmony within the child.

# Professional Guidance in the Selection of Literature

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THE present emphasis upon children's interests as a guide to the books that should be provided for their reading suggests the need of a reconsideration of the question of professional guidance in selection.

The importance of scientific study of children's interests is evident, for modern psychology has shown the relation of selective interest to voluntary action. It would be well if we recognized more clearly the tentative and limited nature of the present findings. The scientific investigators acknowledge it frankly; teachers, librarians, and all others who use these studies should take it into account. The vital need, however, is a realization of the particular contribution made by studies of children's choices, free or conditioned; that it is for purposes of diagnosis rather than prescription. Since children's interests are not derived from physical inheritance but are a social heritage, it is obviously possible for education to induce new interests. "It is highly essential for school people to know what these established interests are, and to use such established preferences as a starting point, but never necessarily as the goal."<sup>1</sup>

This train of thought may seem too familiar to need restatement. But to those who observe the compiling of lists of poems and stories for courses of study and for individual use by elementary teachers, there seems grave need of urging consideration of it. A list made from the seven hundred titles which were recommended by children in the Winnetka study may insure satisfaction to child-readers, but it entails a sacrifice of desirable results. To add "Leetla Humpy Jeem" to the fifth grade list of poems because it headed

the list of poem-choices by fifth grade children in a recent study, indicates a misconception of the use of that study.

Some educators have advocated, as a part of that "free and natural" development in which they believe, that the child should be allowed to read what he will; they contend that he will come to prefer the good through his experience with the bad and the good. If this were sound, it would still be a wasteful and a harmful procedure. The dangerous tendencies of children's unguided choices are represented by these observations which Sterling A. Leonard noted: "Cheap and abominable sorts of achievement are oftenest selected for admiration by children's inexperience;" "Bad sportsmanship and foolish impossibility are presented in the usual stories of school and sports;" "Children—and especially girls—like to read about downtrodden and suffering creatures, no matter how fiberless and vicious, and pour out upon them floods of useless pity, enervating to the pourer."<sup>2</sup>

Where then shall we find a sound guide to the selection of literature for the elementary grades? It seems reasonable to approach the problem from the point of view of the contribution that literature, by its nature, can make to the goal of education for these children. However that goal is phrased—whether in terms of an integrated personality or of the good life—two phases of development are emphasized: adjustment for a successful life and for service to society. Experts in literature should determine what contribution it can make to this development. Rose Colby has made this type of approach in a convincing chapter called "The True Function of

<sup>1</sup> Bamberger and Broening: *A GUIDE TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard: *ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING READING AND LITERATURE*

Literature."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hosis has reported the consensus of opinion he found among contemporary authorities in education and literature;<sup>4</sup> and many recent writers, notably Fries,<sup>5</sup> have analyzed the function of literature as enrichment of experience. We must interpret this in specific terms at the elementary level, with the aid of studies of children's experiences, knowledge, skills, and interests.

Every experience, imaginative as well as actual, causes some change in us; and the nature of that inner change is the measure of value of the piece of literature. Let us take as an illustration, one of the most imperative of these desirable changes, the development of a friendly attitude toward other peoples. Through wisely chosen stories we may increase the interest and sympathy that children naturally feel for the children of other lands. Yet on many a library shelf and story teller's list remain stories that foster prejudice and antagonisms, and—worst of all—that glorify war. Children's Book Week has focussed attention this year on "Round the World in Children's Books." New companions will be added to the familiar child friends, Heidi and Hans, Little Tonino and Donkey John of the Toy Valley, and the others in that lovable procession. And although there is no child in "The Cat Who Went to Heaven," the irresistible little cat will win appreciation for Japanese ideals quite foreign to America. Now when the nations are so gravely conscious of the need for cooperation, we turn to the children that we may build in them a firmer foundation for world goodwill.

Many lines of development through literature bring enrichment to the individual life, even the life of a little child. Certain poems and stories may develop the power to perceive beauty in the familiar setting of his life, as Hilda Conkling found delight in the rooster and the little mouse, the hills and the pansies. The pleasure that comes from the play of the imagination may be refined by a wise choice among modern wonder tales. And

since the character of the imaginative world in which children live is determined to a large degree by their stories, we may save them from morbidity or barrenness of imaginative life. Still another type of enrichment is the cultivation of the emotional nature; not the least important here is leading the child from a crude sense of humor on to higher types by providing such satisfying materials as the Paul Bunyan yarns and the stories of Dr. Dolittle. (Stephen Colvin's stirring essay on "The Educational Value of Humor" should be read by the serious minded teacher.)<sup>6</sup> The children may find compensation for what actual life denies in such thrilling experiences as Toomai's at the elephant dance and Grenfell's *ADrift on an Icepan*. All of this development will be gained as a by-product of the enjoyment that the child has found in story and poem because we have wisely met his interests. Moreover, we would develop the power and the inclination for further experiencing through literature without our guidance.

The possibilities of valuable professional guidance by such a group as The National Council of Teachers of English are unlimited. Research should, of course, be continued. The Council members can indicate problems that they realize demand research for their solution. Some of these concern subjects where there is a conflict in the findings of investigators. For instance, if Mrs. Mitchell's observations of children from two to seven were confirmed, primary teachers and librarians would postpone much of the fairy tale material and increase the realistic in the first two grades. The causes back of children's choices call for investigation. The reports on children's attitude toward poetry are contradictory; investigation into the causes of their reactions might show that the adverse reports are explained by the choice of poems or by the method of presentation. Further, where there is a baffling disagreement in theory, it may be possible to solve it by testing. Take the long standing divergence of

<sup>3</sup> Colby: *LITERATURE AND LIFE IN SCHOOL*

<sup>4</sup> Hosis: *EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN SCHOOL READING*

<sup>5</sup> Fries-Hanford-Steeves: *THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE*

<sup>6</sup> *PEDAGOGICAL SEMINARY*, Volume 14

opinion in regard to the type of story represented by *TREASURE ISLAND*: one man holds that it serves as a purgative of undesirable emotions for the boy reader; another holds that such stories are stimulants to anti-social tendencies. If we need to go outside the Council for help in devising new technique, we can count confidently on the response of such experts as Thorndike. One by one the dubious and disputed would be reduced.

The new books should be evaluated and those found most worthy tried with the children, that we may know their respective claims to a place on our lists. Here our younger members (like the group that gave at the Cleveland meeting such delightful reports of their teaching of literature) may make a valuable contribution through experiment with their classes. To judge the old familiar books by the new standards is more difficult. Yet everyone who has been called on to check a list of titles for recommenda-

tions knows only too well the slight basis for some checks—a dimly recalled reading it may be, or desultory comments by young readers. Multiplying, by hundreds or by thousands of judges, does not change the quality. Serious, sincere work, limited to a few titles for each judge, will insure a desirable revision of the present lists.

We shall distinguish also the books that should be read by the class as a group, either because they call for the removal of barriers to understanding by teacher or classmates, or because the pleasure they give is augmented when shared (as is notably true with humor), or because they provide an experience too valuable to be missed by anyone in the group.

Children's literature, as a phase of education, is still in an early stage, and the possibilities of constructive leadership in this field are unlimited and most alluring.

### EARLY AMERICAN WRITERS FOR CHILDREN

(Continued from page 217)

#### "The Little Boy's May-Day Song"

"The flowers are blooming everywhere,  
On every hill and dell;  
And, O, how beautiful they are!  
How fresh and sweet they smell!"

"The little brooks they dance along,  
And look so free and gay;  
I love to hear their pleasant song,  
I feel as glad as they.

"The young lambs bleat, and frisk about,  
The bees hum round their hive,  
The butterflies are coming out;  
'Tis good to be alive.

"The trees, that looked so stiff and gray,

With green wreaths now are hung;  
O, mother, let me laugh and play,  
I cannot hold my tongue.

"See yonder bird spread out his wings,  
And mount the clear, blue skies;  
And mark how merrily he sings,  
As far away he flies."

"Go forth, my child, and laugh and play,  
And let your cheerful voice,  
With birds, and brooks, and merry May,  
Cry loud, Rejoice, rejoice!"

"I would not check your bounding mirth,  
My little, happy boy;  
For He who made this blooming earth  
Smiles on an infant's joy."



## Recent Books for Christmas

JANE FOSTER

Detroit, Michigan

ANY really good book on a subject suitable to children, is, in a sense, a Christmas book; but a list of this year's publications may well begin with four books about Christmas. Two of them are versions of the story of the Nativity; the third is a fairy tale of toys come alive in the old city of Nuremberg; and the fourth is, happily, a story of Santa Claus's youngest reindeer, told by no other than the Snow Baby.

HERALDS OF THE KING, by Gertrude Crownfield, is a simple and poetic interpretation of the Bible narrative. The first part of the story tells of the appearance of the sign to each of the three Wise Men, and of their journeys, from different parts of the East, to Damascus, where they met, to travel together toward Bethlehem. The story of the vision of the shepherds follows, and then the narrative returns to the Wise Men, their encounter with Herod, and of their worship of the Child. This really admirable rendering of the story deserves to be more fittingly illustrated.

The second Christmas book uses the Bible text; those sections of Matthew and Luke that deal with the Nativity, are brought together in a beautiful volume, with illustrations by Maud and Miska Petersham. *THE CHRIST CHILD*, is the title of the volume. The pictures are, it seems to me, the finest work yet done by these two distinguished artists. The Petershams understand that intricate detail and subtle use of light and color, admirable in certain types of illustration, do not appeal to children,<sup>1</sup> and have therefore used, in this volume, soft, clear colors and simple definite design. The result is one of the most beautiful Christmas books that has appeared

in some years. The pictures seem to illustrate the text as well, for our own day, as the manuscript illuminations did for readers of the Middle Ages.

*A DOLL, TWO CHILDREN, AND THREE STORKS* is the title of a gay Christmas fantasy of the toys of old Nuremberg. Good Benno Claus, the clerk in Master Leopold's toy shop, is falsely accused of stealing, and is taken to prison, just before Christmas. His two children, Otto and Nina, would have had a dreary holiday, if the toys hadn't intervened. Every toy left Nuremberg, in company with the two children, three storks, and a wise little elf, called Wee Martin Furry. They traveled for a year, and after many adventures, returned to a wiser Nuremberg and a happier Christmas. The story is translated from the Italian of "Teresah" by Dorothy Emmrich.

The fourth of these new books about Christmas is written by Marie Ahnighito Peary, the "Snow Baby." *LITTLE TOOKTOO* is the story of a baby reindeer, who journeys north with his uncle to Santa Claus' workshop. There Little Tooktoo meets the reindeer who draw Santa's sled on Christmas Eve—"Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen—" every child knows them. When Cupid, one of the sledge deer, is attacked by wolves, and injured, Tooktoo defends him, and as a reward, is allowed to accompany Santa on his brilliant Christmas Eve trip. Kurt Wiese's illustrations are superior to much of the work he has done recently. The book would make a charming gift for children of from five to eight.

By virtue of the fact that James S. Tippet's *TOYS AND TOY MAKERS* deals with a Christmas commodity, it might be classed with the Christmas books. The book is informational.

<sup>1</sup> See "Illustrating Books for Children," by Maud Petersham. *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, March, 1925.

but no less interesting for being so. It is, however, probably more suited to school room and library than to the child's Christmas stocking. The volume is an outgrowth, Mr. Tippet says, of a fourth grade's interest in repairing old toys and making new ones. Before putting the material into book form, Mr. Tippet submitted it to various fourth grades, who approved it. There has been a real need for just such a book, and its appearance at this season is timely; librarians and teachers will want to put the volume on the display shelf along with other toy books—HITTY, THE PAINTED PIC, POOR CECCO, and others of that beloved company.

A recently issued collection of Tolstoy's tales, edited for children, should receive a hearty welcome. The collection is entitled IVAN THE FOOL, and the stories are translated by Mr. and Mrs. Aylmer Maude. Besides the title story, the tales included are "God Sees the Truth, but Waits," "A Prisoner in the Caucasus," "What Men Live By," "Two Old Men," and "Where Love Is, God Is." Tolstoy's tales, with their simplicity, and insistence upon kindness, are Christmas in spirit, if not actually in subject.

The number of children's books, excellent alike in typographical make-up and literary quality is so great that it would be impossible to give an exhaustive list in these pages. Even a selection must be more or less unsatisfactory, since numbers of excellent titles would be omitted. A random survey, however, shows some exceptionally charming gift books for children.

One such book, that would be welcomed by almost any child, is a tiny volume of riddles entitled CAN YOU ANSWER IT? The book is very attractive, with rows of question marks marching across its gay blue binding, and many line drawings. Nina Fikes is the compiler and Grace Allen the artist.

One of the very happy combinations of author and illustrator is that of Walter De La Mare and Dorothy P. Lathrop. Two of Mr. De La Mare's fairy tales, "The Dutch Cheese," and "The Lovely Myfanwy" are issued

in a volume illustrated by Dorothy Lathrop and entitled THE DUTCH CHEESE. Stories, illustrations, and fine typographical work combine to make this book a beautiful gift.

BLACKFACE, by Thelma Harrington Bell, with drawings by Corydon Bell, and THE SHIRE COLT by Zhenya and Jan Gay each deserves more space than it is possible to give in this paper. BLACKFACE is a whimsical story of an inquisitive and adventurous lamb. The pictures are delightful, as are those in THE SHIRE COLT. The adventures that befall Brownie, the colt, are those that a real little colt might have—green grass, frogs, rabbits, lambs, rain, stars at night—whereas Blackface's doings are those one might expect from a fictitious, but vivacious and determined character.

It seems almost ungracious not to mention such excellent books as Robert Charles' A ROUNDABOUT TURN, with drawings by Leslie Brook, SNIPPY AND SNAPPY by Wanda Gag, THE GREEDY GOAT, by Emma L. Brock, and many others. The number of excellent books available for children this Christmas is so large that one wishes that, like the toys of Nuremberg, they might organize a crusade, not to leave town, but to drive away from children's bookshelves everything that is sensational, trashy, or common.

#### *Books Mentioned in this Article*

- HERALDS OF THE KING. By Gertrude Crownfield. Illustrated by Frances W. Deléhanty. Dutton, 1931. \$1.50
- THE CHRIST CHILD, as told by Matthew and Luke. Made by Maud and Miska Petersham. Doubleday, Doran, 1931. \$2.00
- A DOLL, TWO CHILDREN, AND THREE STORKS. By Teresah. Translated from the Italian by Dorothy Emmrich. Illustrated by William Reetz. Dutton, 1931. \$2.50
- LITTLE TOOKTOO. By Marie Ahnighito Peary. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. William Morrow, 1930. \$2.00
- TOYS AND TOY MAKERS. By James S. Tippet. Illustrations by Elizabeth Enright. Harper, 1931. \$2.50
- IVAN THE FOOL. By Leo Tolstoy. Translated by Mr. and Mrs. Aylmer Maude. Illustrated by Norman Tealby. Oxford University Press.
- CAN YOU ANSWER IT? Compiled by Nita Fikes.

# Editorial

## DIAGNOSIS OF A DISAPPOINTMENT

MISS Beale, who writes on "Professional guidance in the selection of Literature" in this issue of *THE REVIEW*, displays an active interest in the problems of teaching elementary school English that is today too rare among instructors in teacher training institutions and elementary school supervisors. There is a need for constructive thinking here, and of active leadership, and it is encouraging to find Miss Beale sizing up the needs in the subject of elementary school literature, and appraising the official acts of an organization like The National Council of Teachers of English in the light of these needs.

Critical comment on the Council's provision for meeting the more immediate of these needs is not with Miss Beale a matter of censure, but of earnest desire to see educational leadership effectively directing some of its energies toward problems immediate and near at hand in elementary school English as well as upon those more remotely related in time. In the January issue of *SCHOOL PROGRESS*, published by the State Teachers College, Mankato, Minnesota, Miss Beale discusses quite concretely some phases of "Appreciation Through Literature" at the elementary school level. In conclusion, she asks emphatically, "Where can we find a safe guide to the selection of literature in the elementary grades?" She declares that the question "presses for answer *now*." Then she continues, "The National Council of Teachers of English has undertaken to answer that question in an integrated curriculum in English from the kindergarten through the college, but," she challenges, "that project will need *five*, or it may be, *ten* years for satisfactory completion. Meanwhile, where shall we find guidance?"

That the Council has, during the past year, permitted the larger curriculum project to rule off the slate, temporarily, plans for immediate guidance in this connection, is only too well known to the readers of this page in *THE REVIEW*. In March, 1930, editorial comment and announcement was made, following the Kansas City convention of The Council, concerning a program of activities authorized by the board of directors in grade school English. These included the compilation of a recreational reading list for elementary school children, grades one through eight, the formulation of criteria for the organization of professional courses in the elementary English curriculum of teacher training institutions, and the making of a course of study in elementary school English based upon children's experiences.

Committees were organized for these projects, and their personnel published in *THE REVIEW*. Work was begun with much enthusiasm. In particular, the Committee on the Recreational Reading List set to work with the "immediate task" of preparing the list for publication. Plans were made for completing the first draft of the list within the year under the direction of committee members distinguished for the work they have done in the field of children's literature.

But then came plans for the larger activities of the Curriculum Commission. The Council is large enough to direct groups of workers at all levels of interest, kindergarten, elementary school, junior and senior high school, and college and university, over varying periods of time without serious interference among the groups. There can be no question of this. Yet what happened? The

(Continued on page 231)

## Reviews and Abstracts

MAMIE. By Edna Potter. Oxford University Press, New York, 1931

Illustrators of juvenile books too often fall prey to the desire to write their own stories and pampering this urge has led to the publication of too many books with attractive illustrations and mediocre texts. Edna Potter is in a class by herself. She shows a rare double talent, as readers of her delightful new story of old Providence will discover. Her story, built around a little girl who is sent to the grocery for a quart of beans, a pound of pork and a dozen eggs, is strongly realistic and has in its makeup that musical repetition of words that has helped many a rhyme and tale outlive its own generation. The drawings, also by Miss Potter, display the action and color needed to attract the small child and picture in exquisite detail the goat, the horse car, the candy shop and other distractions that made Mamie forget her grocery list on the way to the store.

Mamie is accomplished in ways that will appeal to children from four to eight. She climbs with the facility of a monkey; she walks on stilts; she practices tight rope tactics on the top of the fence. She is anything but a "goody-goody"; a likable, livable newcomer in juvenile literature.

Mary G. Newton

SCALAWAG. By Aime Rebald. Illustrated. Frederick A. Stokes Company. 1931. \$2.00

"Scalawag," now translated into English by Frederick S. Hoppin for the first time, is a high caliber animal story, designed for children between six and eight, that gives, besides an account of the amusing and desperate scrapes of an energetic little puppy, an excellent portrayal of French country life.

If Wags' exploits are, with few exceptions, those common to puppydom everywhere—slipper carrying, petty thievery, gluttony, and duck chasing—all the more credit is due the author for the suspense and humor she manages to instill into her simple narra-

tive.

Wags is quite irresistible from the very day he begins his adventures, riding away from his meat-market home in the net shopping bag of Madame Peluchon. The description of this first journey will give an idea of Aime Rebald's fresh style.

"Good Heavens! The four feet, the tail, the ears, and the tip end of the nose of the puppy, who had been pressed down by the weight of the chops, had been pushed through the mesh of the string bag till they touched the ground . . . the bag was walking along, apparently all by itself!"

Mary G. Newton

PETER. By Juliska Daru and Charlotte Lederer. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1931. \$2.50

In "Peter," Juliska Daru and Charlotte Lederer have written a companion volume to their exciting story of Stephen the Valiant. Peter, grandson of that other Peter who befriended Stephen the Valiant when he was a boy, is able, with four companions, to follow gallantly in the footsteps of his grandfather and to render great personal service to the King. The reader is prepared for treachery afoot against Stephen from the first and young Peter turns private detective, investigating the strange green lights that glow at night in the hills near his home, discovering a queer old coin with letters difficult to decipher, finding a tobacco box embossed with a curious coat of arms, and studying the actions of Marci and his uncle, unpleasant strangers who are visiting the miller, Galambos.

Action is the keynote of the appeal of this adventure tale for girls and boys from eight to twelve years old; princes in disguise, kings in distress, and peasant heroes are part of its ingredients. The illustrations by Miss Lederer, one of the co-authors, seem somewhat crude, but on the whole catch the spirit of the story and the foreign atmosphere very well.

Mary G. Newton

### RECENT BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 226)

Designed by Grace Allen. Oxford University Press, 1931.

THE DUTCH CHEESE. By Walter De La Mare. Illustrated by Dorothy P. Lathrop. Knopf, 1931. \$2.50

BLAKFACE. By Thelma Bell. Illustrated by Corydon Bell. Doubleday, Doran, 1931. \$1.50

THE SHIRE COLT. By Zhenya and Jan Gay. Double-

day, Doran, 1931. \$2.00

A ROUNDABOUT TURN. By Robert H. Charles. Illustrated by Leslie Brook. Frederick Warne, 1930. \$1.50

SNIPPY AND SNAPPY. By Wanda Gag. Coward McCann, 1931

THE GREEDY GOAT. By Emma L. Brock. Knopf, 1931



# National Council of Teachers of English

## PROGRAM

*Schroeder Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 26-28, 1931*

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

*Meeting of the Board of Directors, 2:00 p. m.*

*Opening Session, 8:00 p. m.*

**"Current English Practices and Experiments"**

Vital Suggestions for English Departments from the National Survey—Roy O. Billett, English Specialist on National Survey of Education, Washington, D. C.

Recent Tendencies in English Instruction: Their Implications—Dora V. Smith, Official Observer of English, National Survey, University High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Normalizing English Instruction: President's Address—R. L. Lyman, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

*General Session, 9:30 a. m.*

**"The English Curriculum in the Making"**

Chairman: R. L. Lyman, University of Chicago  
Greetings from Milwaukee—Superintendent Milton C. Potter, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Ideal Curriculum—W. W. Hatfield, Chicago Normal College, Chicago, Illinois

Simplifying the Maintenance Program in the Teaching of English—Frances R. Dearborn, Baltimore Public Schools, Baltimore, Maryland

What Conventions Shall We Teach? How?—J. C. Tressler, Richmond Hill High School, New York City

An Experience Curriculum in Literature—Walter Barnes, New York University, New York City

English Majors and Others—O. J. Campbell, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Real Correlation—Ruth Mary Weeks, Paseo High School, Kansas City, Missouri

### *Section Committee Luncheons, Noon*

*Elementary Committee:* Chairman, Maude McBroom, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

*Topic:* Enrichment of English Instruction

Literary Enthusiasms—John T. Frederick, Editor, THE MIDLAND

Illustrations of the Enrichment of Literature through Music—Ruth Moscrip, State Teachers College, St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Anne Pierce, University Schools, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

*Departmental Organization Committee:* Chairman, C. C. Hanna, Lakewood High School, Lakewood, Ohio

*Topic:* Initiating Reform through Supervision

The Head of the Department—Harlan C. Koch, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Challenge of Subject Matter—Joanna Zander, Englewood High School, Chicago, Illinois

The Class Teacher—Miriam Moody, Rayen High School, Youngstown, Ohio

*Conferences on Special Subjects, 2:00 p. m.*

### *Conference on Differentiation*

Chairman: George W. Norvell, State Department of Education, Albany, New York

*Topic:* Attention to Individual Needs and Interests

Remedial Work with Deficient Readers—W. S. Gray, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Units Illustrating Differentiation of Instruction in Literature—Angela Broening, Baltimore Public Schools, Baltimore, Maryland

What Textbook Makers Can Do in Adaptation—B. R. Buckingham, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Denver's Two-Track Language Course—A. K. Loomis, University High School, Chicago, Illinois

### *Conference on Correlation*

Chairman: H. B. Lampion, Director of Curriculum, Highland Park City Schools, Highland Park, Michigan

*Topic:* Extension of English Influence beyond the English Classes

A Plan of Correlation—Lizette McHenry, University High School, Urbana, Illinois

How English Disciplines Can Be Extended—A. Laura McGregor, Department of Public Instruction, Rochester, New York

Deferred Credit and Personnel Work — Edith Shepherd, University of Chicago High School, Chicago, Illinois

*Conference on Teacher Training*

Chairman: O. B. Sperlin, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Topic: Training Better Teachers

State-Wide Programs of Teacher Training in English—Carrie B. Parks, State Teachers College, Indiana, Pennsylvania

Teacher Training in Leading European Nations—Ida A. Jewett, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City

Training in English Needed in the Preparation of Elementary School Teachers—Thomas W. Gosling, Superintendent of Schools, Akron, Ohio

*Conference on College Problems*

Chairman: Charles C. Fries, Department of English, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Topic: The Place of Research in the Graduate Training of Teachers of English

Leaders of the discussion: Ronald Crane, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, Norman Foerster, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Discussion from the floor

*Conference on Problems of Journalism*

Chairman: Anne Lane Savidge, Central High School, Omaha, Nebraska

Topic: Publication Departments as Laboratories for English Composition

Use of the Newspaper in Motivating Creative Writing—Mary Perkins, Jessup Scott High School, Toledo, Ohio

Modern Methods in Teaching High-School Journalism—Helen E. Blaisdell, South High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Place of the Magazine in the Publication Program—Abigail O'Leary, Central High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota

*Annual Business Meeting, 4:30 p. m.*

*Annual Dinner, 6:00 p. m.*

Toastmistress: Luella B. Cook, Central High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Servants of Democracy — Alexander Meiklejohn, Chairman of Experimental College, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin

"What You Are Speaks So Loud, I Don't Hear What You Say"—Gordon J. Laing, Dean, Division of Humanities, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Section Meetings, 9:00 a. m.

*College Section*

Chairman: O. J. Campbell, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Topic: Should the Course in Freshman Composition be Abolished?

Leaders of the discussion: Warner Taylor, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; Alvin C. Eurick, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Discussion from the floor

*Teachers College Section*

Chairman: Anthonette Durant, State Teachers College, Platteville, Wisconsin

Topic: Reconstruction of Courses in English in Teachers Colleges

The Professionalization of English—E. G. Doudna, State Department of Education, Madison, Wisconsin

Criteria for Selecting the Subject Matter of Courses in English—Ida A. Jewett, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City

Providing a Cultural Background for the Teacher in Training—Walter Barnes, New York University, New York City

*Senior High School Section*

Chairman: Harry E. Coblenz, Principal, South Division High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Topic: Improved Methods of Teaching

New Approach to Old Classics—Hazel B. Poole, West Side High School, Newark, New Jersey

Suggestions for Creative Writing—Mildred Wright, Evanston High School, Evanston, Illinois.

Self-revelation as a Composition Objective—Maurice W. Moe, West Division High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*Junior High School Section*

Chairman: Florence McNeece, Oklahoma City High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Opportunity of the Opportunity Teacher—Merrill Bishop, Director of English in the Junior High Schools, San Antonio, Texas

Organizing Junior High School Literature—A. Laura McGregor, Department of Public Instruction, Rochester, New York

Functional Centers of Expression—Roy C. Johnson, Harris Teachers College, St. Louis, Missouri

*Elementary School Section*

Chairman: C. C. Certain, Editor, *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*. Detroit Teachers College, Detroit, Michigan

Topic: Remedial and Individual Work in Elementary School English

The Elementary School and Poor English—Maude McBroom, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; Chairman, Committee on Elementary School English

Fundamentals in Silent Reading—W. S. Gray, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Individualization of Instruction in English—Carleton Washburne, Superintendent of Schools, Winnetka, Illinois

A Council Program of Scientific Guidance in Elementary School Composition—M. R. Trabue, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Discussion from the floor

*Luncheon, Noon*

Twentieth Anniversary of the National Council

Toastmistress: Essie Chamberlain, Oak Park and River Forest High School, Oak Park, Illinois

Professor Fred Newton Scott—J. V. Denny, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

The Council after Twenty Years—James F. Hosic, Columbia University, New York City

Creation and Criticism Again—Franklin B. Snyder, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

*Exhibits*

Chairman: Maurice W. Moe, West Division High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Literature and Composition Test Material

Specimens of Project Work in Literature and Composition

Mechanical Aids and Devices for the English Classroom

## EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 227)

Council became absorbed in the Curriculum Commission, and the Committee on the Recreational Reading List among others, has been repeatedly retarded in its work because of the lack of official consciousness in the Council of the urgency of such problems in the field of elementary school English.

With membership largely from high schools and universities, the Council is definitely biased in the direction of secondary school and college English. Even within the Curriculum Commission, the Elementary School Committee Unit has had to reorganize itself "on the pattern of the Secondary Committee, in order that each phase of the curriculum may be integrated throughout." One might question, in passing, why elementary school English might not be taken as a *foundation upon which to build*, rather than something to strap to the belt of the high schools, if the Council is really sincere in its desire to build an English curriculum from the kindergarten through the universities. Why pattern on the Secondary Committee? Why? Simply because the Council is secondary school minded. It needs to shake itself, and wake up to the real meaning of what it is doing, and what it should be doing for

elementary school English.

Once the Council gets the point of view of the importance of elementary school English, these delays in official sanctions, these postponements, and this procrastination on matters elementary may stop. Miss Beale's question that presses for an answer *now* may then have an answer. When that day comes, the editor of *THE REVIEW* will cease receiving letters making such queries as the following, from those who have the right and a much provoked right to make them:

"Two years ago the National Council of Teachers of English created a committee or sub-committee for the preparation of a report and reading list of supplementary books for the elementary schools. I have looked everywhere for a report of that committee which presumably would have been made last November at the Cleveland meeting, but I have not been able to find any definite information."

Of course, the elementary group is not without blame, for their sufferings in part come from the fact that they are weak in numbers in the Council. They are unreasonable to complain without organized action. It is necessary for them to recruit additional members for The Council, to gain a voice in legislative and executive matters.

The Council has been organized twenty-two years. What definite contribution has it ever made, as an organization, to elementary school English? Is it not time, after nearly

a quarter of a century's neglect, for it definitely to set up a program of activities in elementary school English, and give the program its unqualified support?

C. C. C.

## PRESENT TRENDS IN THE TEACHING OF SPELLING

(Continued from page 219)

words seems more than should be expected. During the recent standardization of a series of mastery tests in spelling for use at semester ends, it was found that the upper third of the pupils in grades 2 to 8, inclusive, obtained an average median score of 99 per cent; the middle third, 91 per cent; and the lowest third, 71 per cent. This represents the situation in towns and cities in nine different states and suggests rather clearly that standards should be determined by what is humanly possible. Under improved conditions the standards for the lowest third of the pupils will probably rise, but it is quite safe to predict that under normally good conditions it will be reasonable to accept something considerably less than 100 per cent for them on a 4,000-word list.

Another development in spelling measurement has to do with a new type of test for measurement in spelling. It is called an error-correction test. It is composed of items like the following:

1. My sister and I shall go (together) ..... Each item contains a word like "together" misspelled and enclosed in parentheses. The pupil is directed to write this word correctly on the dotted line at the end of the sentence.

The validity of this test has been investigated in four separate experiments, with different sets of words and at different levels of instruction. The average coefficient of validity was found to be .94, scores on a column test for the same pupils and the same words being used as the criterion. Moreover, the error-correction test was found to agree with the column test as closely as the column test agreed with itself. This was shown in two

determinations in which the reliability of the column test was found to be .94.

This new type of test has many distinct advantages over the old column and dictation tests. It consumes less time, it relieves the teacher of dictation, it is as valid as the best standard tests in other subjects, it is an especially convenient instrument of measurement in individual-instruction schools, and it will make possible the construction of a standardized test that can be administered like other standardized tests—merely by giving a few simple initial directions.

### SUMMARY

The following procedures relating to curriculum and methods may be mentioned as indicative of present trends in the teaching of spelling:

1. Constructing the minimal list in the main from words that are used with high frequency in the written expression of both children and adults.
2. Grading the list objectively in accordance with the word needs of children in written expression.
3. Training children to form the habits of study shown by investigations to be effective.
4. Providing diagnostic and remedial treatment for cases of special disability.
5. Abolishing the standard of perfection for achievement after teaching and substituting objectives that are normally attainable.
6. Bringing into use a new-type test called the error-correction test.



## THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

This much-discussed topic in education will be fully treated in the DECEMBER, 1931, ISSUE of

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